

was based on a dispassionate study of the facts and documents laid before Mm. He weighed them with his usual care, exactly as he weighed the documents he collected fox his books; and it must not be imagined that the charges he eventually formulated were brought in any haphazard fashion. Zola's intellect, one may repeat it, was essentially systematic, and his judgment of facts and his logical powers were exceptionally good.¹ At the time of his trial in Paris there were many gaps in his information, undoubtedly, but its full extent was not then revealed, owing to the extraordinary course imparted to the proceedings by the judge and the military men. Various facts which were not publicly divulged until much later were kept back deliberately by the novelist's counsel, Maltre Labori, as a matter of strategy, and it follows that Zola's action was far less quixotic than some people then took it to be.

It has been assumed occasionally that the novelist's intervention began with his famous letter, "J'"Accuse." That, of course, is an error. One day in November, 1897, while he was out walking, he met M. Fernand de Rodays, the director of "Le Figaro," and they talked of the Affair together. Zola realised that M. de Rodays had arrived at much the

i "The Westminster Gazette" published on January 16, 1898, a letter from the present writer, in which he said, *mter alia*: "I regard Zola as a man of very calm, methodical, judicial mind. He is no ranter, no lover of

words for words' sake, no fiery enthusiast. . . . If ever he brings forward a theory he bases it on a mountain of evidence, and invariably subordinates his feelings to his reason. I therefore venture to say that if he has come forward in this Dreyfus case it is not because he *feels* that wrong has been done but because he is absolutely *convinced* of it. Doubtless many of the expressions in Ms recent letter to President Faure have come from his heart, but they were in the first place dictated by his reason. It is not for me at the present hour to speak of proofs . . . but most certainly Zola has not taken up this case without what he considers to be abundant proof."